

NATURE'S BIN

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Healthy Bones

Two new studies show nutrients reduce hip fracture in postmenopausal women

Calcium with vitamin D

Doctors had encouraged women with severe menopause symptoms to use hormone therapy, but have since discouraged it due to side effects. This two-part study included 16,089 women already taking hormone therapy or a placebo, plus calcium and vitamin D or placebo.

The doses were 1,000 mg of calcium plus 400 IU of vitamin D per day. After more than seven years of follow up, women on hormone therapy plus calcium and vitamin D had fewer fractures compared to placebo or to women on hormone therapy alone.

Doctors said that during an average year, compared to placebo, half as many women would experience a hip fracture when taking hormone therapy with calcium and vitamin D.

Omega-3 and omega-3/6 balance

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are essential to the diet because the body does not synthesize them, and needs to get them from foods. The typical American diet has too much omega-6 compared to omega-3, creating an unhealthy imbalance.

Doctors in this study wanted to test a new theory using omega-3 and omega-6 levels to predict chances of



hip fracture. The researchers said that red blood cells give a more accurate reflection of how much omega-3 and omega-6 people consume and absorb over the long term.

In the study, doctors measured red blood cell levels of omega-3 and omega-6 in 648 postmenopausal women who had experienced a hip fracture. Women whose omega-6 levels were highest compared to omega-3 were nearly twice as likely to have experienced a hip fracture as women whose omega-6 levels were closer in balance with omega-3.

Doctors also found that, compared to women with the lowest levels, women who had the highest red blood cell levels of the omega-3 eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), were 54 percent less likely to have experienced a hip fracture.

REFERENCE: MENOPAUSE; JUNE, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE

OCTOBER'S

Healthy Insight Dark Secrets of (Dark) Cocoa

Prior studies have found health benefits from cocoa antioxidant polyphenols. In this study, doctors gave 72 healthy adults a dark chocolate drink containing 500 mg or 250 mg of cocoa polyphenols per day, or a placebo. After 30 days, compared to placebo, those who had taken the high dose of cocoa polyphenols reported having a much greater sense of calmness and overall contentedness. While the polyphenols didn't appear to change mood within a couple of hours of drinking cocoa, the general overall mood benefits appeared over time, with participants reporting dark cocoa mood improvements at 30 days.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY; 2013, Vol. 27, No. 5, 451-8

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Breast Health

Nutrients ease symptoms and lower chances of breast cancer

Curcumin eases radiation dermatitis

Nearly all women who undergo radiation for breast cancer experience some form of dermatitis, a painful, itchy inflammation of the skin. Earlier lab studies found curcumin prevented radiation burns and blisters, which led doctors to this human study.

During the course of radiation treatment, 30 women with breast cancer took 2,000 mg of curcumin three times per day, or a placebo. Doctors measured the severity of dermatitis and found, compared to placebo, women who had taken curcumin experienced 24 percent milder dermatitis symptoms overall.

In one particular measure—skin scaling or peeling—nearly nine in 10 women in the placebo group

experienced symptoms compared to fewer than three in 10 women in the curcumin group.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Earlier findings from breast cancer research on fatty acids have been mixed. For the first time, doctors in this review analyzed all available trials worldwide, including Asia, Europe, and the United States, covering a total of 883,585 women in 21 independent studies.

Doctors said that fish are the most abundant source of omega-3 fatty acids, but that the studies in this review also included omega-3 fish oil supplements as a dietary source.

Overall, compared to those with lower levels, women who either consumed more omega-3s, or who

had higher omega-3 tissue levels were 14 percent less likely to develop breast cancer. Doctors also found a possible link: chances for breast cancer declined by 5 percent for each incremental increase of 100 mg of omega-3s per day.

REFERENCE: RADIATION RESEARCH; 2013, VOL. 180, No. 1, 34-43



Colon Health

Nutrients may reduce chances of colorectal cancer

Riboflavin and vitamin B6

Doctors said that certain B vitamins may support colon health by regulating homocysteine, an inflammatory factor linked to colorectal cancer. In this study, doctors measured the diets of 88,045

postmenopausal women and followed up for an average of 14 years.

Compared to women who consumed less than 1.8 mg of riboflavin per day, women who consumed more than 3.97 mg of riboflavin per day were 20 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancer. For vitamin B6, also known as pyridoxine, compared to those who consumed less than 1.52 mg of vitamin B6 per day, women who got more than 3.88 mg of vitamin B6 per day were 20 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancer.

Glucosamine and chondroitin

Glucosamine and chondroitin are anti-inflammatories people most often take for joint pain. In this exploratory study, doctors compared the chances for colorectal cancer among 75,137 older

adults who were or were not taking glucosamine and chondroitin over a seven-year period.

Overall, doctors found participants who had taken glucosamine and chondroitin at least four days per week for at least three years were 45 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancer than those who did not take glucosamine and chondroitin.

Lifestyle appeared to play a role. The effects were most positive in those who were underweight or normal weight. Healthy-weight participants were more likely to eat more vegetables and less processed red meat, and to exercise more compared to those who were overweight or obese, factors which could influence the results, doctors said.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; DECEMBER, 2012, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Sharper Minds

B vitamins may help preserve brain size and function

B vitamins and brain volume

The brain shrinks with age, and shrinkage in certain areas of the brain is linked to Alzheimer's disease (AD). At the start of this study, doctors measured brain size in older adults with higher chances of developing AD and found no differences in the volume of gray matter.

Participants then took a placebo



or 800 mcg of folic acid, 500 mcg of vitamin B12, and 20 mg of vitamin B6 per day. Over the next two years, both groups lost gray matter, but the placebo group lost seven times more gray matter than the B-vitamin group, which lost just one-half percent.

Also, in the placebo group, those with high levels of homocysteine, an inflammatory factor linked to AD, lost more gray matter compared to those with lower homocysteine levels. In the B vitamin group, doctors observed a chain of events in those with high homocysteine levels: B vitamins lowered homocysteine, which directly slowed the shrinking of gray matter, reducing cognitive decline after two years.

Folate levels and brain function

In this two-part study, doctors measured folate levels and assessed mental ability in 593 older men and women and, in the second part, analyzed results from 12 folate studies covering 9,747 older people.

Among the 593 participants, those with low folate levels were more likely to have impaired brain function. In the 12 other studies, doctors found those with low levels of folate were 66 percent more likely to have impaired brain function compared to those with healthy folate levels.

REFERENCE: PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES; MAY, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Healthy Hearts

Nutrients reduce heart failure in adults and children

What is heart failure?

Heart failure occurs when the heart does not pump enough blood to the body, and can affect both adults and children.

Coenzyme Q10

In this study, 420 adults with moderate to severe heart failure took a placebo or 100 mg of CoQ10 three times per day, while continuing standard medical therapy. After three months, while there was no change in the placebo group, those in the CoQ10 group had much lower levels of an amino acid linked to heart failure. After two years, 25 percent of those in the placebo group had experienced a major cardiovascular event compared to 14 percent for CoQ10. Also after two years, 17 percent in the placebo group had passed away compared to 9 percent for

those who took CoQ10.

Discussing their findings, doctors said this is the first double-blind study of chronic heart failure to show that CoQ10 can improve survival.

Vitamin D in infants

In this first controlled study of vitamin D for infants with heart failure, 80 babies took 1,000 IU of vitamin D per day, or a placebo, while undergoing standard heart failure medical treatment.

After 12 weeks, compared to placebo, infants taking vitamin D had improved in several measurements of heart function and had higher levels of anti-inflammatory molecules, and lower levels of pro-inflammatory molecules.

Dr. John Cannell of the Vitamin D Council, an expert who was not involved in the study, said that after

12 weeks, the vitamin D group was able to pump significantly more blood than placebo and had greatly increased circulating levels of vitamin D.

REFERENCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF HEART FAILURE; 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE





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Chile Cocoa

Looking for a fall treat that will warm you up and put a smile on your face? Try this delicious mood-enhancer and please see page 1 for new research on how dark cocoa improved mood in 30 days.

Ingredients:

2 c milk, full or reduced fat, or non-dairy
4 tbsp dark natural cocoa powder, unsweetened
1 tsp vanilla
1/4 tsp red chile powder
3 oz sweetened dark chocolate (65-85% cocoa content), grated fine, hold a small amount aside
Cinnamon sticks for garnish



Directions: In a small pot, heat milk while whisking in the cocoa powder. Stirring continuously, add the vanilla and bring briefly to a boil. Immediately remove from heat and whisk in chile powder and dark chocolate until smooth. Garnish with remaining grated chocolate and cinnamon stick. Serve immediately. Makes two cups.

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